

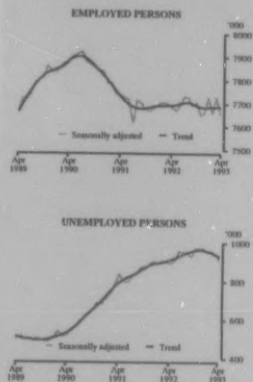
Thursday, 20 May 1993



statistics

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Trend unemployment falling

The provisional trend estimate of unemployment fell in April 1993 for the fourth successive month, after increasing since November 1989. Trend estimates of total employment are relatively flat although the trend in full-time employment continues to increase. The trend estimate of the unemployment rate has fallen in each of the last three months and the trend participation rate has been decreasing since August 1992.

Employment

The April 1993 seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons was 7,652,000, a fall of 75,300 since March. Full-time employment fell by 36,400 to 5,904,500, with falls of 24,300 and 12,100 respectively in the number of males and females in full-time employment. The seasonally adjusted estimate of part-time employment fell by 39,000 to 1,747,500, with female part-time employment falling by 23,100 to 1,317,300 and the number of males in part-time employment falling by 15,800 to 430,200.

Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons in April 1993 was 914,200, a decrease of 27,200 since March. Male unemployment increased by 15,900 to 590,600, mainly due to a rise of 11,900 in the number of males seeking full-time work. Seasonally adjusted female unemployment fell by 43,100 to 323,500, with falls of 29,500 and 13,600 respectively in the number of females seeking full-time work and part-time work.

LABOUR FORCE ESTIMATES
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Unemployed	Unemployment rate — per cent —	Participation rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
	— '000 —					
1993						
January	5,903.7	1,822.3	7,726.1	954.0	11.0	62.9
February	5,893.8	1,765.4	7,659.2	956.3	11.1	62.4
March	5,940.9	1,786.4	7,727.3	941.3	10.9	62.7
April	5,904.5	1,747.5	7,652.0	914.2	10.7	61.9

Unemployment rate

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the unemployment rate in April 1993 was 10.7 per cent, a fall of 0.2 percentage points since March. The male unemployment rate fell by 0.4 percentage points to 11.8 per cent, while the female unemployment rate fell 1.0 percentage point to 9.1 per cent.

Participation rate

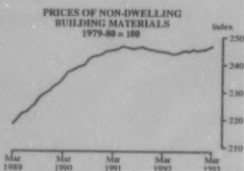
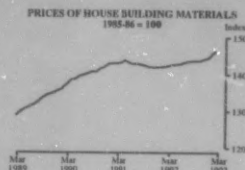
The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate in April 1993 was 61.9 per cent, a fall of 0.8 percentage points since March. The male participation rate fell 0.4 percentage points to 73.4 per cent. For females, the participation rate was 50.6 per cent, a fall of 1.2 percentage points since March.

Prices of building materials — increase in timber and concrete

Higher prices of structural timber and ready mixed concrete were mainly responsible for an overall increase in the price of building materials in March 1993.

In March, the price of timber and concrete used in house building rose by 1.7 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively. Similarly prices of timber and concrete used in other forms of building increased by 2.3 per cent and 0.8 per cent. Allowing for other price increases and decreases, the price of materials used in house building increased by 0.5 per cent from February to March and those for materials used in other forms of building by 0.2 per cent.

On an annual basis, prices of materials used in house building increased by 2.9 per cent and by 0.9 per cent for materials used in other forms of building.



PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, MARCH 1993
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.8	2.1	0.1	-0.8
Melbourne	0.7	4.6	0.4	2.5
Brisbane	0.1	2.4	0.1	1.7
Adelaide	0.6	3.9	0.2	1.1
Perth	0.4	1.1	0.3	0.7
Hobart	0.0	1.4	0.1	0.8
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.5	2.9	0.2	0.9
Darwin	— Not available —		-0.6	-0.2
Canberra	0.1	2.1	0.1	0.4

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities (6407.0)*, or contact Mark Dickson on (06) 252 6198.

Small business is big business

The 'typical' Australian employing business is a proprietary limited company employing less than five people. It operates from just one business location, is in the finance, property and business services sector of the economy and is capital city based.

This information, and other industry-wide views of Australian businesses and business structures are available from *Profiles of Australian Business*, the first issue of which was released last week.

Continued ...

The publication contains statistics taken from an August 1992 'snapshot' of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) business register, a database on Australian employing businesses (including government agencies and non-profit organisations) plus all farms. It gives a breakdown of both public and private business by industry, employment size, State of location and type of legal structure.

An example of the economy-wide perspectives on the structure of business is that only about 8 per cent of employing businesses operate from more than one location and only about 1 per cent operate from locations in more than one State.

The publication also shows that the largest 2,000 businesses account for about 50 per cent of all Australian employees with the largest 100 employing about 25 per cent. By contrast, nearly 85 per cent of employing businesses have less than 20 staff, while under 1 per cent of businesses employ more than 100 staff.

Of businesses with more than 100 employees, about 20 per cent are in the public sector, although the public sector accounts for less than 1 per cent of total businesses.

In the private sector overall, there are more unincorporated businesses (e.g. sole proprietors, partnerships etc.) than incorporated businesses. Looking at individual types of legal structure, however, the most common type is the proprietary limited company (38%) and even for those businesses with less than five employees, 25 per cent are proprietary limited companies.

For further information, order the publication *Profiles of Australian Business* (1322.0), or contact Richard Cottom on (06) 252 5406.

Slight increase in home lending

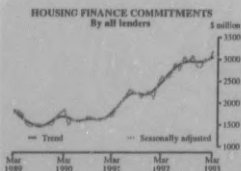
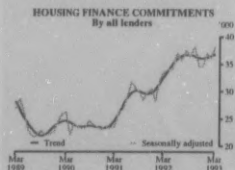
The provisional trend estimate for the number of dwelling units financed for owner occupation in March 1993 increased by 1.0 per cent over the February 1993 estimate, and represented an increase of 12.8 per cent over the March 1992 estimate. This may indicate that the slight downward trend, which began in September 1992, has ceased in December 1992.

The increase in the trend estimate for March 1993 reflected an increase across the three housing lending categories.

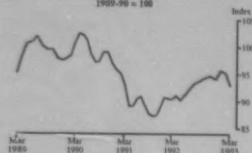
The increase in the provisional trend estimate for each lending category was 'construction of dwellings', up 0.7 per cent; 'purchase of existing dwellings', up 1.2 per cent; 'newly erected dwellings', up 0.1 per cent. For the category 'newly erected dwellings' this is the first monthly upward movement since the trend began to decline in July 1992.

The seasonally adjusted estimate for the number of dwelling units financed in March 1993 increased by 5.6 per cent over February 1993. The corresponding original figures recorded an increase of 23.8 per cent during March 1993.

For further information, order the publication *Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia* (5609.0), or contact Darryl Malam on (06) 252 7117.



EXPORT PRICES
1989-90 = 100



Fall in export prices

The Export Price Index fell 24 per cent between February and March 1993 to stand only 2.8 per cent above its position one year earlier.

A general factor contributing to the March decrease was the rise in the value of the Australian dollar against the major trading currencies. Price decreases were recorded for about half the items in the index. The main contributors to the decrease were wool, coal and wheat.

EXPORT PRICES, MARCH 1993
Percentage change

Commodity group	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Prepared foodstuffs	-1.9	7.9
Vegetable products	-3.1	7.4
Live animals and animal products	-1.3	7.1
Mineral products	-2.5	5.6
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	0.8	4.8
Machinery and mechanical appliances	-0.8	3.2
Products of chemical or allied industries	-2.1	3.1
Gold, diamonds and coin	-3.4	3.0
Base metals and articles of base metals	-4.3	-1.9
Wool and cotton fibres	-3.6	-13.8
All groups	-2.4	2.8

For further information, order the publication *Export Price Index, Australia* (6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

Faster growth of R&D spending in higher education sector

From 1988 to 1990, higher education expenditure on research and development (HERD) increased 25 per cent to \$1,351 million at current prices. At average 1984-85 prices, this is approximately \$986 million — an increase of 15 per cent.

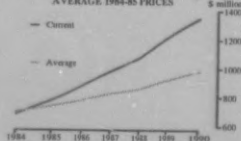
At average 1984-85 prices, HERD increased at an annual rate of approximately 7 per cent between 1988 and 1990 compared with an annual rate of approximately 5 per cent between 1984 and 1988.

In 1990 HERD represented 0.36 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared with 0.32 per cent in 1988. Australia ranked fifth in the OECD countries for the HERD/GDP ratio, behind Japan, the Netherlands, the USA, and Germany.

In 1990, the four major fields of research in which most higher education R&D expenditure occurred were medical and health sciences (\$225 million), biological sciences (\$159 million), the humanities (\$119 million) and engineering (\$90 million). These positions were similar in 1988, with the exception of humanities and engineering which swapped positions.

Continued ...

R&D EXPENDITURE AT CURRENT AND
AVERAGE 1984-85 PRICES



HERL/GDP RATIO
Compared with other OECD countries

Japan	.54
Netherlands	.48
USA	.44
Germany	.40
Australia	.36
Canada	.35
Finland	.35
France	.35
UK	.33
Turkey	.32
Belgium	.29

The Commonwealth Government funded 88 per cent of research and development in higher education in 1990, down from 91 per cent in 1988.

RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT CARRIED OUT BY HIGHER
EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS
\$ million

	1984	1986	1988	1990
At current prices				
Universities	663.1	844.9	1,022.3	1,274.3
Colleges of Advanced Education	22.7	36.7	54.5	76.5
Total	685.7	881.7	1,076.8	1,350.8
At average 1984-85 prices				
Universities	679.8	750.8	819.8	934.2
Colleges of Advanced Education	23.3	32.2	41.1	51.6
Total	703.2	783.0	860.9	985.8

There were 27,081 person years devoted to research and development in the higher education sector in 1990. Researchers accounted for 76 per cent of this research effort with technicians and other supporting staff accounting for the remainder.

For further information, order the publication *Research and Experimental Development, Higher Education Organisations, Australia (8111.0)*, or contact Derek Byars on (06) 252 5627.

This week in brief ...

☐ Overseas arrivals and departures

The total number of overseas movements in February 1993 was 813,000, 4 per cent more than in February 1992. There were 431,000 arrivals (5% more than in February 1992) and 382,000 departures (3% more than in February 1992).

Source: *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia, February 1993 (3401.0)*.

☐ Award rates of pay

Over the 12 months to March 1993, the weekly award rates of pay index for full-time adult employees rose by 1.0 per cent. For full-time adult males and full-time adult females the indexes rose by 0.9 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively.

Source: *Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia, March 1993 (6312.0)*.

☐ Foreign trade — international cargo

The value of total inward cargo for the September quarter 1992 was \$14,580 million, an increase of \$1,586 million (12%) compared with the June quarter 1992 and up \$1,759 million (14%) on the September quarter of the previous year. The gross weight of this cargo was 9.3 million tonnes, up 4 per cent on the June quarter 1992 and up 13 per cent on the September quarter of the previous year.

Source: *Foreign Trade, Australia: International Cargo, September Quarter 1992 (5440.0)*.

Inquiries

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Editor

(06) 252 6104

Statistics Weekly
20 May 1993

Order from the following:

Expected releases over the fortnight to 1 June

- 19 Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, March 1993 (6412.0; \$10.70)
- 20 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, March 1993 (6411.0; \$10.70)
Import Price Index, Australia, March 1993 (6414.0; \$8.20)
- 25 Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, February 1993 (6302.0; \$12.70)
Manufacturing Production, Australia, April 1993, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.70)
- 26 Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1994, March Quarter 1993 Survey, Preliminary (5625.0; \$10.70)
Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, April 1993 Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.70)
- 27 Stocks, Manufacturers' Sales, March Quarter 1993 and Expected Sales to December 1993, Australia (5629.0; \$10.70)
Company Profits, Australia, March 1993 (5651.0; \$10.70)
- 28 Balance of Payments, Australia, March Quarter 1993 (5302.0; \$21.40)
- 31 Balance of Payments, Australia, April 1993 (5301.0; \$16.30)
Building Approvals, Australia, April 1993 (8731.0; \$13.30)

Selected releases: 12 to 18 May

General

Monthly Summary of Statistics, Aust., May 1993 (1304.0; \$20.40)
Queensland Pocket Year Book, 1993 (1302.3; \$8.50)

Demography

Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Aust., February 1993 (3401.0; \$6.60)

National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Foreign Trade, Aust.: Merchandise Imports, March 1993 (5433.0; \$9.70)
Foreign Trade, Aust.: Merchandise Imports, March Qtr 1993 (5435.0; \$19.40)
Foreign Trade, Aust.: International Cargo, September Qtr 1992 (5440.0; \$9.70)

Labour statistics and prices

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., March 1993 (6312.0; \$12.70)

Agriculture

Livestock Products — Meat, Qld, March 1993 (7204.3; \$5.10)

Manufacturing, Mining, Energy, Service Industries, Building and Construction

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Qld, February 1993 (8741.3; \$10.70)

Building Approvals — Private Sector, Perth Statistical Division, April 1993 (8732.5; \$5.00)

Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, WA, March 1993 (9303.5; \$7.60)

Key national indicators	Period	Units	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National accounts						
Gross domestic product (GDP(A)) at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	n.a.	93,598	0.7	2.5
International accounts						
Balance on current account (b)	Mar. 93	\$m	-1,935	-2,132	148	96
Balance on merchandise trade (b)	"	"	-554	-709	—	—
Balance on goods and services (b)	"	"	-668	-933	—	—
Merchandise exports	"	"	5,012	4,739	-7	5
Merchandise imports	"	"	-5,566	-5,448	16	26
Net foreign debt	31 Dec. 92	\$m	168,251	n.a.	2.7	16.1
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	213,744	n.a.	2.6	13.1
Consumption and investment						
Retail turnover at current prices	Mar. 93	\$m	7,835	8,017	-1.2	2.5
New capital expenditure at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	"	7,020	6,472	13.0	10.9
New motor vehicle registrations	Mar. 93	no.	51,598	45,109	3.6	-5.1
Production						
Manufacturers' sales at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	34,960	33,470	2.7	2.2
Dwelling unit approvals	Mar. 93	no.	15,759	14,550	1.6	13.6
Building approvals	"	\$m	2,114	1,972	-7.2	13.8
Building work done at 1989-90 prices	Dec. qtr 92	"	6,391	6,086	2.0	6.1
Prices						
Consumer price index	Mar. qtr 93	1989-90 = 100.0	108.9	n.a.	0.9	1.2
Articles produced by manufacturing industry (d)	Feb. 93	1988-89 = 100.0	114.8	n.a.	0.3	2.9
Materials used in manufacturing industries (e)	Feb. 93	1984-85 = 100.0	126.7	n.a.	0.0	4.8
Labour force and demography						
Employed persons	Apr. 93	'000	7,662.2	7,652.0	-0.1	-0.4
Participation rate †	"	%	62.1	61.9	-0.8	-0.9
Unemployment rate †	"	"	10.8	10.7	-0.2	0.2
Job vacancies	Feb. 93	'000	29.8	28.9	-4.4	8.3
Average weekly overtime per employee	"	hours	1.14	1.16	3.0	3.8
Estimated resident population at end of qtr	Sept. 92	million	17.6	n.a.	0.3	1.3
Short-term overseas visitor arrivals	Feb. 93	'000	245	233	-2.2	10.8
Incomes						
Company profits before income tax	Dec. qtr 92	\$m	4,853	3,728	-10.2	25.1
Average weekly earnings, full-time adults; ordinary time	Feb. 93	\$	595.50	n.a.	1.5	1.1
Financial markets						
Interest rates (c) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	Mar. 93	% per annum	5.35	n.a.	-0.45	-2.20
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	7.80	n.a.	-0.20	-2.10
Exchange rate — \$US	Mar. 93	per \$A	0.7073	n.a.	4	-7

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (c) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (d) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 19 May 1993. (e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 20 May 1993.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Percentage change from same period previous year

Key State indicators

Period	NSW	Vic.	QL	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New capital expenditure*	Sept. qtr 92 -15.9	-15.2	2.9	-29.3	0.3	-18.8	n.a.	n.a.	-10.6
Retail turnover (trend estimate)	Mar. 93 -0.9	2.9	6.2	0.3	7.6	3.5	n.a.	7.1	2.6
New motor vehicle registrations†	Mar. 93 -4.5	-3.9	-10.5	-5.6	-3.5	2.6	16.3	25.3	-5.1
Number of dwelling unit approvals*	Mar. 93 15.5	10.9	21.8	7.8	8.5	7.2	120.8	-19.7	13.6
Value of total building work done	Dec. qtr 92 0.7	-1.2	15.8	15.2	16.4	13.1	-9.5	-0.5	5.6
Employed persons*	Apr. 93 -3.3	-0.2	2.1	0.6	2.5	-1.2	-4.7	5.9	-0.4
Capital city consumer price index	Mar. qtr 93 1.1	1.1	1.5	1.9	0.3	1.6	3.4	1.8	1.2
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time)	Nov. 92 0.9	1.2	1.4	3.4	1.2	3.2	5.9	1.7	1.4
Population	Sept. 92 1.1	0.8	2.5	0.7	1.6	0.8	1.0	2.3	1.3
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc.	Sept. qtr 92 3.9	2.5	3.7	0.2	2.0	-0.7	-0.7	1.7	2.9

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 7). Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. The ABS should be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of this publication.

